

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY
LAND CONSERVATION SUBCOMMITTEE**

Pursuant to Section 18.94 Wis. Stats., a regular meeting of the Brown County Land Conservation Subcommittee was held on Monday, December 16, 2019 in Room 200 of the Northern Building, 305 E. Walnut Street, Green Bay, WI

Present: Chair Norb Dantine, Supervisor Steve Deslauriers, Supervisor Alex Tran, Supervisor Bernie Erickson, Supervisor Dave Kaster, Citizen Member Stan Kaczmarek
Also Present: County Conservationist Mike Mushinski, Extension Agent Whitney Prestby, Supervisors Van Dyck and Suennen, other interested parties.

I. Call Meeting to Order.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dantine at 6:00 p.m.

II. Approve/Modify Agenda.

Motion made by Citizen Member Stan Kaczmarek, seconded by Supervisor Kaster to approve. Vote Taken. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. Approve/Modify Minutes of October 21, 2019.

Motion made by Supervisor Kaster, seconded by Supervisor Erickson to approve. Vote Taken. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Comments from the Public. None.

Land and Water Conservation

1. Budget Status Financial Report for September and October 2019 – Unaudited.

County Conservationist Mike Mushinski informed financially the department is in good shape and he anticipates that to continue through the end of the year.

Motion made by Supervisor Erickson, seconded by Supervisor Tran to receive and place on file. Vote taken. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. Lake Michigan Area Land and Water Conservation Association Board of Directors Annual Planning and Budget Meeting, January 10, 2020.

Mushinski referred to information in the agenda packet and said this is the planning meeting for the year. The meeting will be held at the STEM Center and Mushinski invited anyone interested to attend.

No action taken.

3. 2020 WI Land & Water Conference, March 4th – March 6th, 2020 – KI Convention Center.

Mushinski informed there is also information on this in the agenda packet. Brown County will have two presentations during the event; one on the Northern Pike project and the other on the Demonstration Farm. Anyone interested in attending can let Mushinski know and he will work on the registrations.

No action taken.

4. Director's Report.

a. Overview of Producer Focused Conservation Survey Data.

Whitney Prestby, Natural Resource Educator with the University of Wisconsin – Madison Division of Extension provided a presentation at this time on the Fox Demo Farms: Outreach Update. A copy of the presentation is attached.

Following the presentation, Chair Dantine asked if the farmers who are operating the facilities were surveyed or if they surveyed the land owners. Prestby responded that the survey was sent to the farmers who are making the management decisions. They sent out to 300 farms, excluding one very, very large farm. Mushinski said when another survey goes out, it will go out to all farms. He continued that the financial piece is huge and so is the timing. Supervisor Deslauriers said anecdotally when the farm size gets down to a certain point, farmers lose the luxury of experimenting with farming practices because they are leveraged to a point where a mistake could kill them. He feels it is a little different for the larger farms versus the smaller farms and said the smaller operations care for their land as well, if not better than the larger operations; it is just that they cannot always experiment with the alternative practices. He feels more participation from smaller farmers would go a long way, especially if a return on a safe investment could be shown.

Citizen Member Stan Kaczmarek said where the Fox Demo Farm comes into play is that they can show what the big producers as well as the smaller producers can do. He feels knowing what you can do with what you have is important as is being able to adapt to what you have and what you can hire to get done. Kaczmarek would also like to see the survey ask about what is in rental contracts and if they contain anything about conservation. Prestby responded that they did a survey with non-operating owners and the sense was that there is a strong desire to protect the land and water and that is a priority for a lot of the land owners. However, the most important factor seemed to be the relationship with the farmer and a lot of the agreements are pretty informal. They have also talked about doing more targeted events for non-operating land owners to get them up to the farms to learn more about the practices and how they could be incorporated into their contracts.

Dantine and the rest of the subcommittee thanked Prestby for her presentation.

Motion made by Supervisor Deslauriers, seconded by Supervisor Erickson to receive and place on file. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Other

5. Such Other Matters as Authorized by Law.

Kaczmarek noted the Town of Pittsfield asked them to come out and brief them on the new Chapter 26 which they did and it was an interesting session. He also noted that one of the things coming out of the Water Quality Task Force is positions for land and water people next year and he asked if the County is up to full staff. Mushinski said he has not heard of this, but he would apply for some of those funds. Mushinski mentioned there may be other opportunities for funding as well.

6. Adjourn.

Motion made by Citizen Representative Stan Kaczmarek, seconded by Supervisor Erickson to adjourn at 6:24 pm. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Giannunzio
Administrative Specialist



Fox Demo Farms: Outreach Update

Whitney Prestby
Natural Resource Educator
University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension

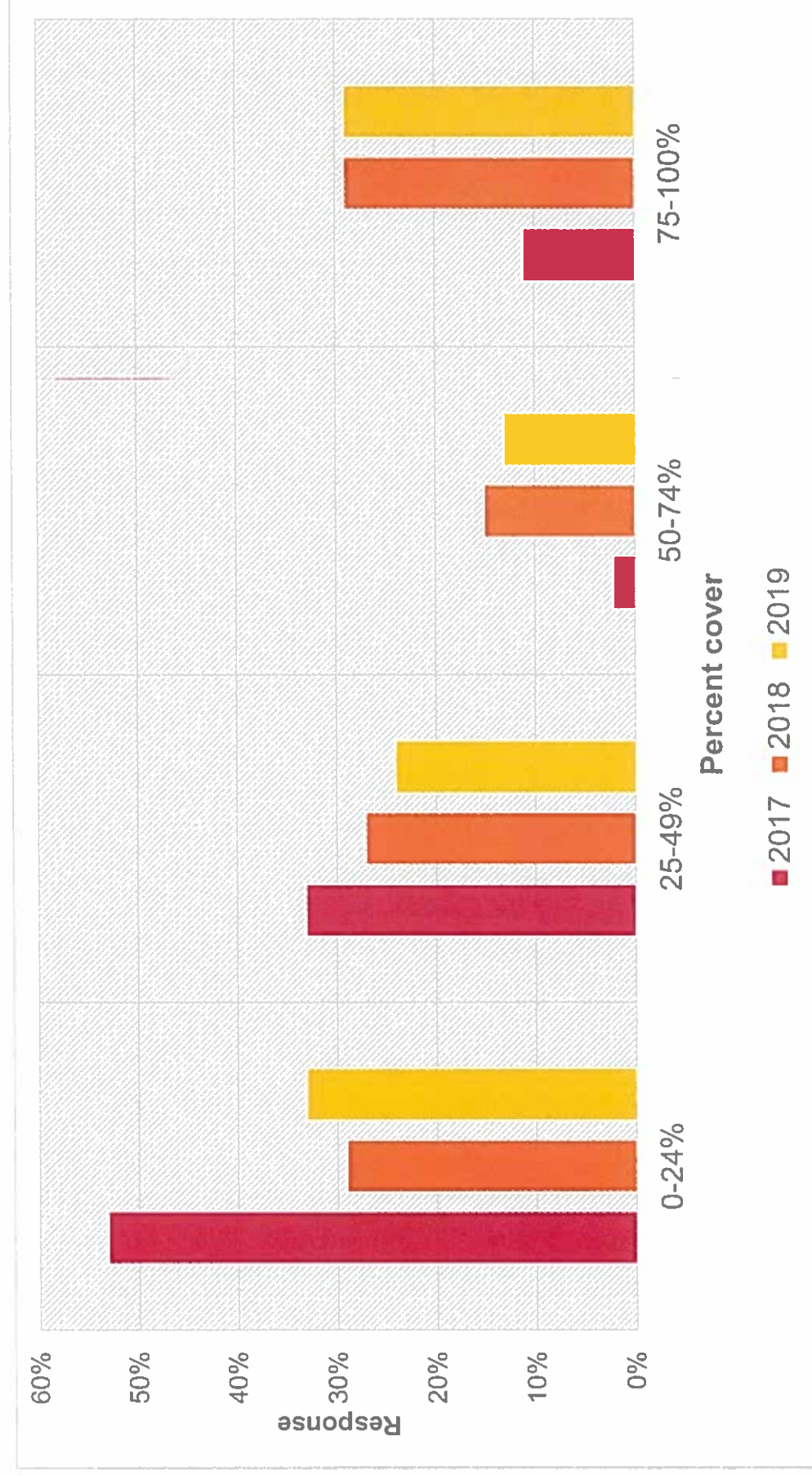


LOWER FOX

Demonstration Farms Network

Fox Watershed Farmer Roundtable

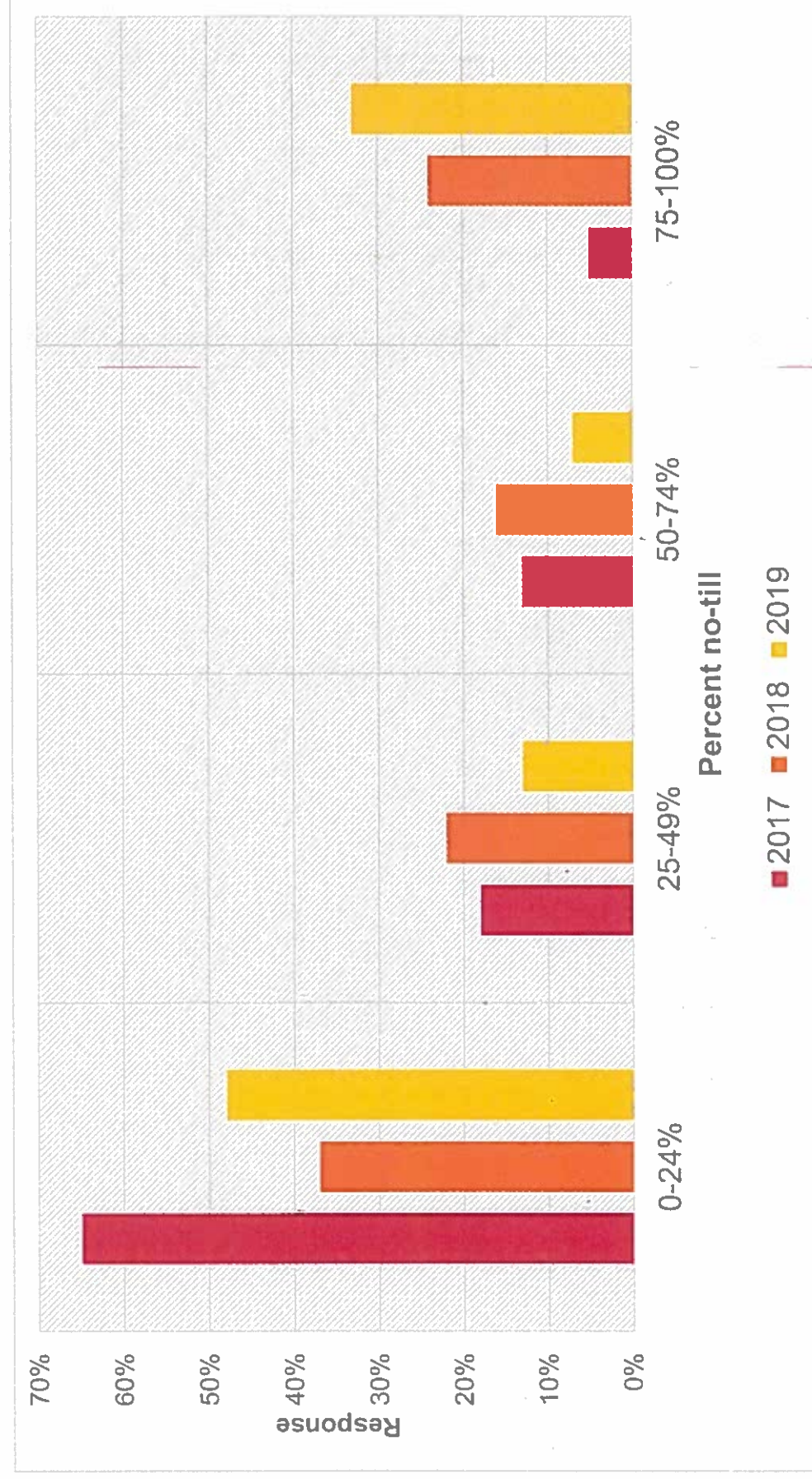
What percentage of your acres are under cover crops (not including alfalfa)?



2017 (N=45), 2018 (N=41), 2019 (N=unknown)

Fox Watershed Farmer Response Roundtable

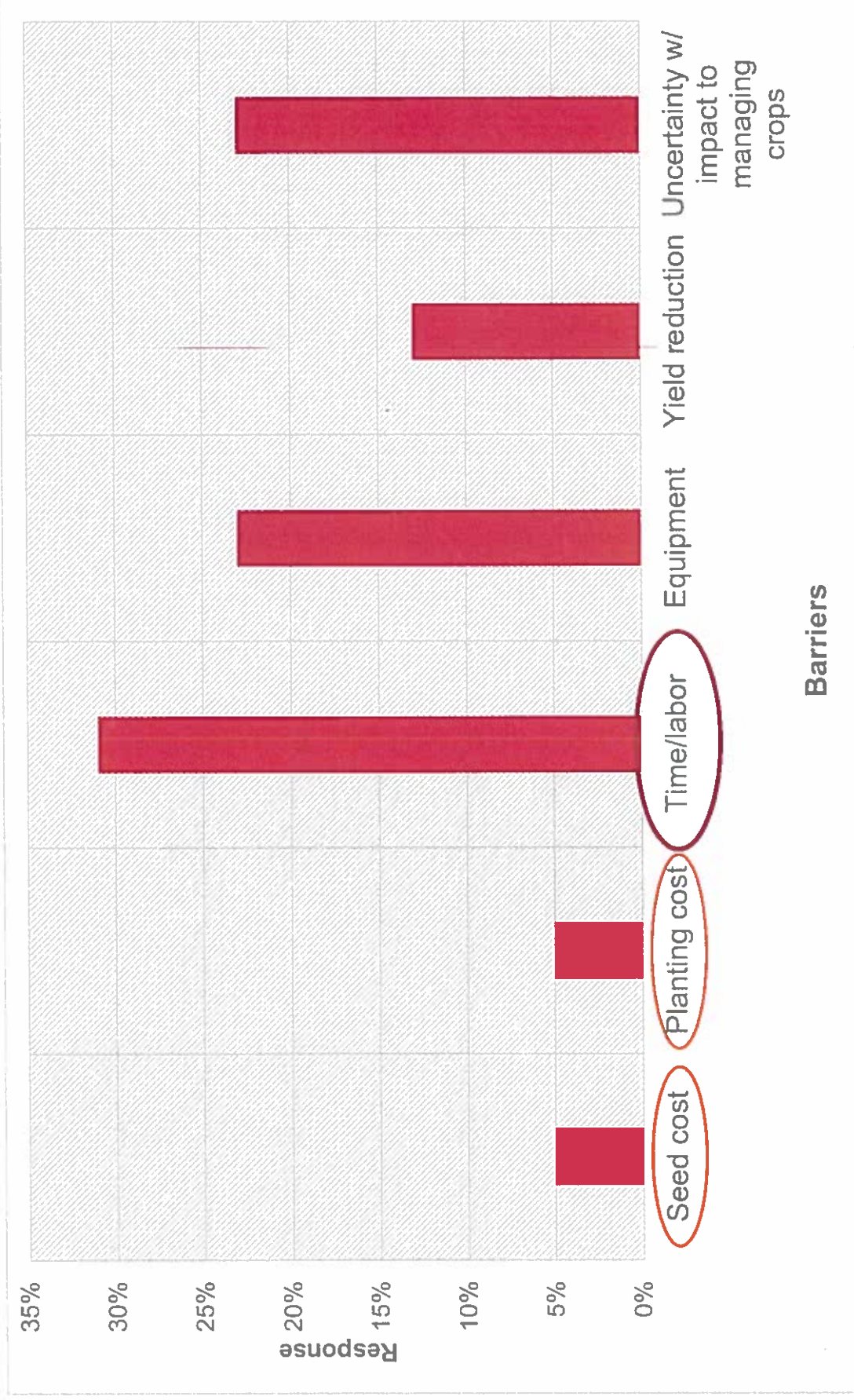
What percentage of the acres you farm are no-tilled each year?



2017 (N=40), 2018 (N=49), 2019 (N=unknown)

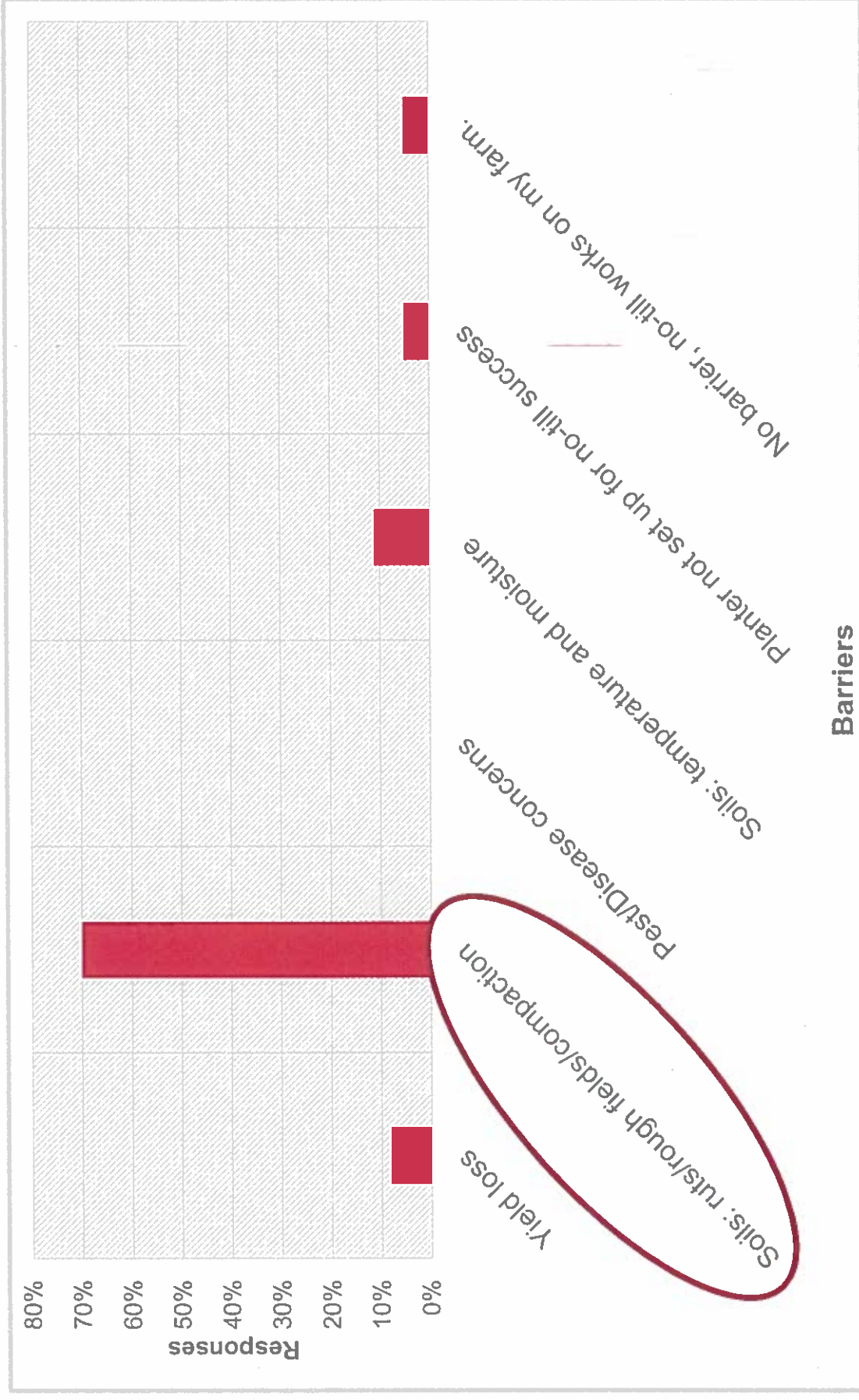
Fox Watershed Farmer Roundtable

What is preventing more cover crop plantings on your farm? (2017)



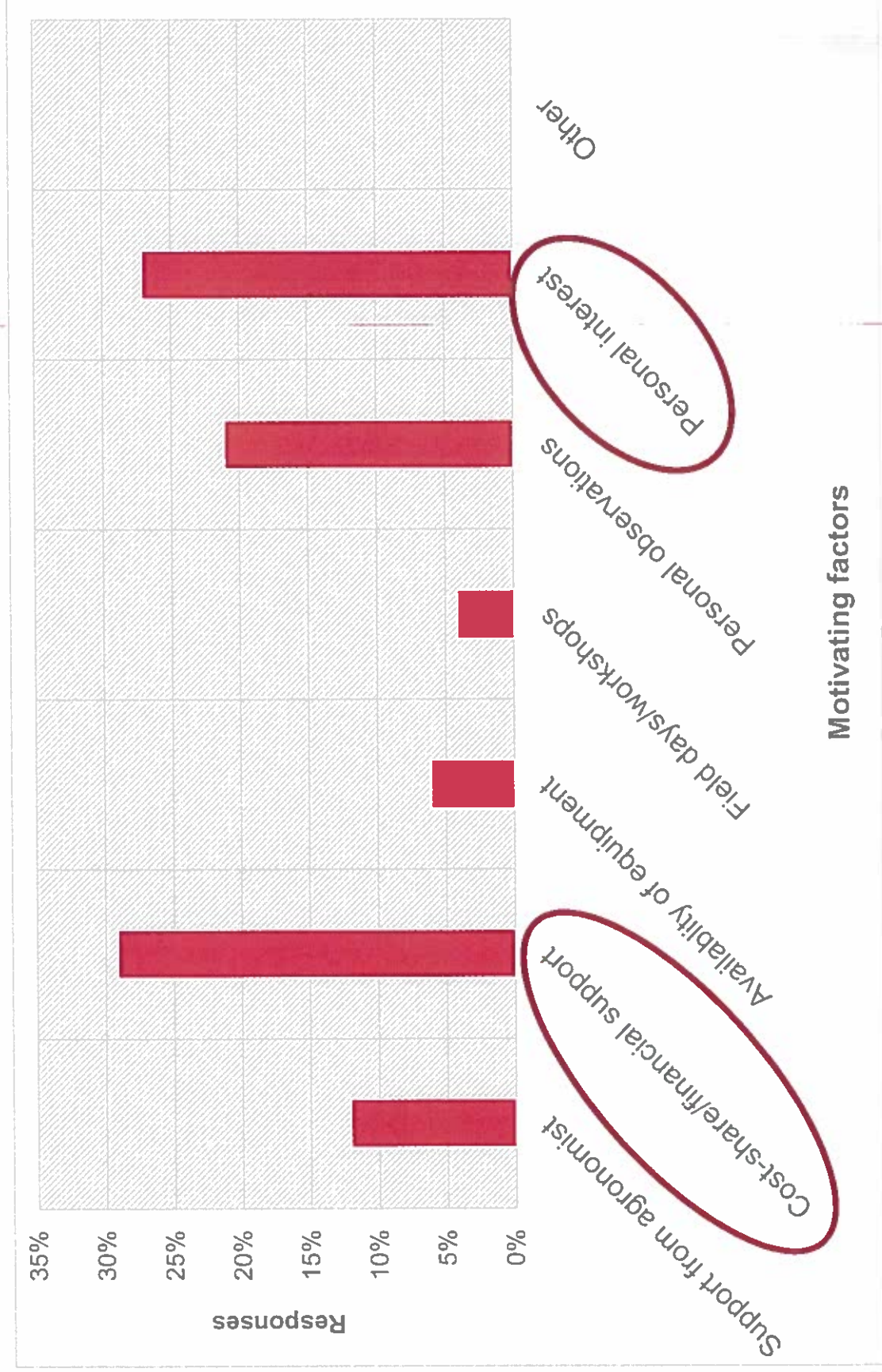
Fox Watershed Farmer Roundtable

What is the biggest barrier to no-till planting? (2017)



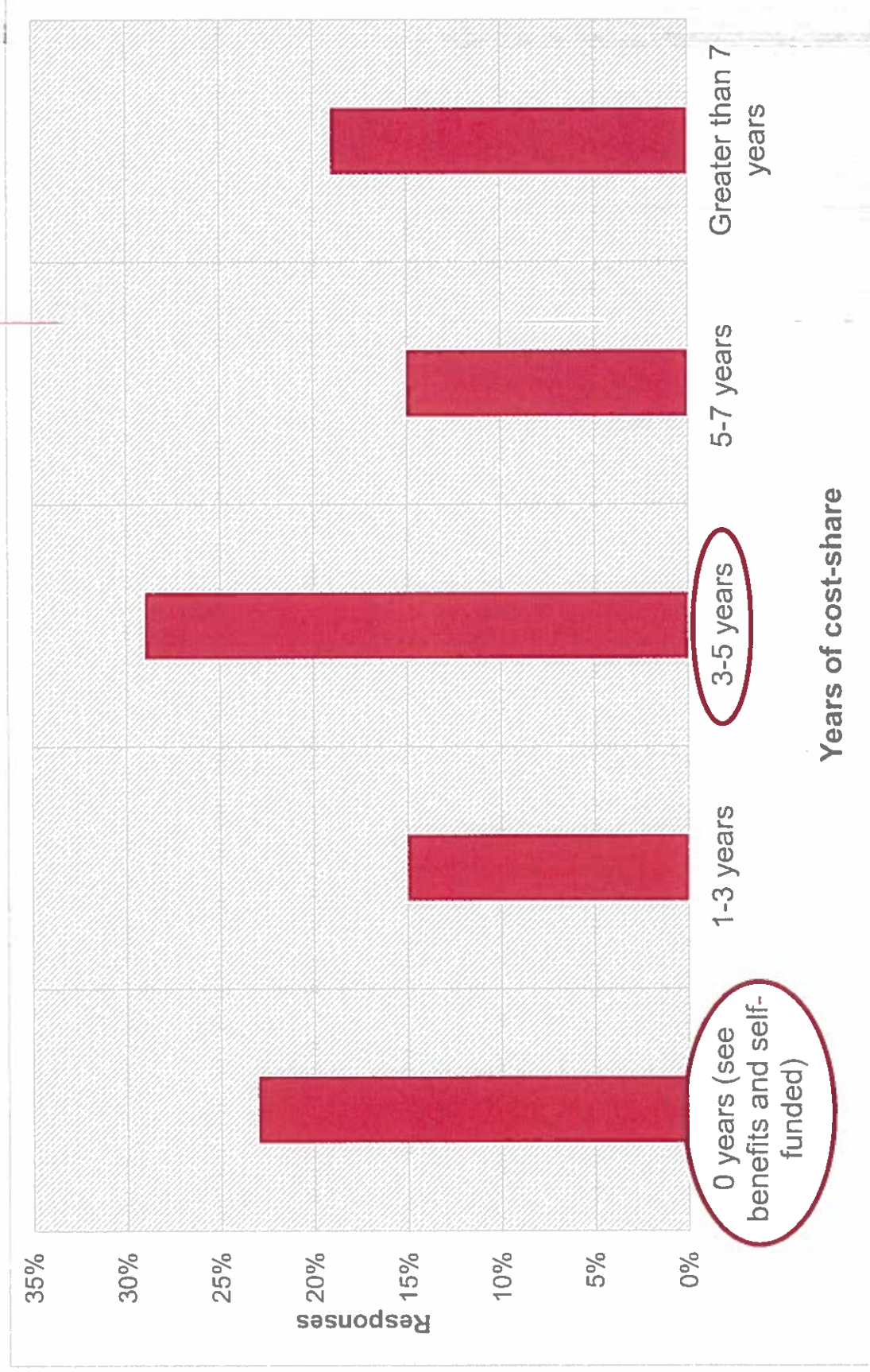
Fox Watershed Farmer Roundtable

What is the most important factor motivating you to adopt a new conservation practice, such as cover crops or no-till? (2019)



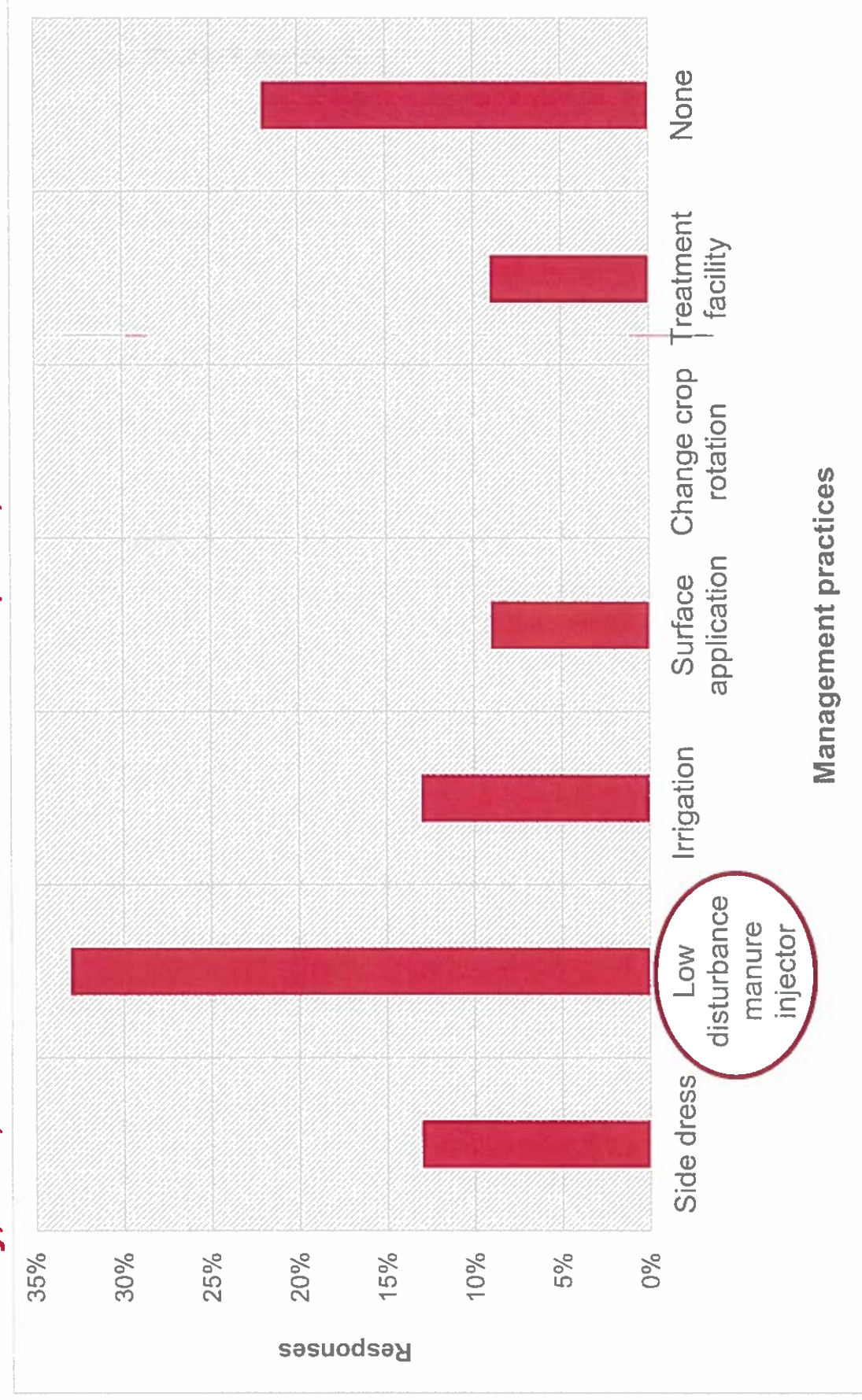
Fox Watershed Farmer Roundtable

Knowing that soil health improves after several years of continuous cover crops and reduced tillage, how many years of cost-share assistance is needed on your farm to achieve soil health? (2019)



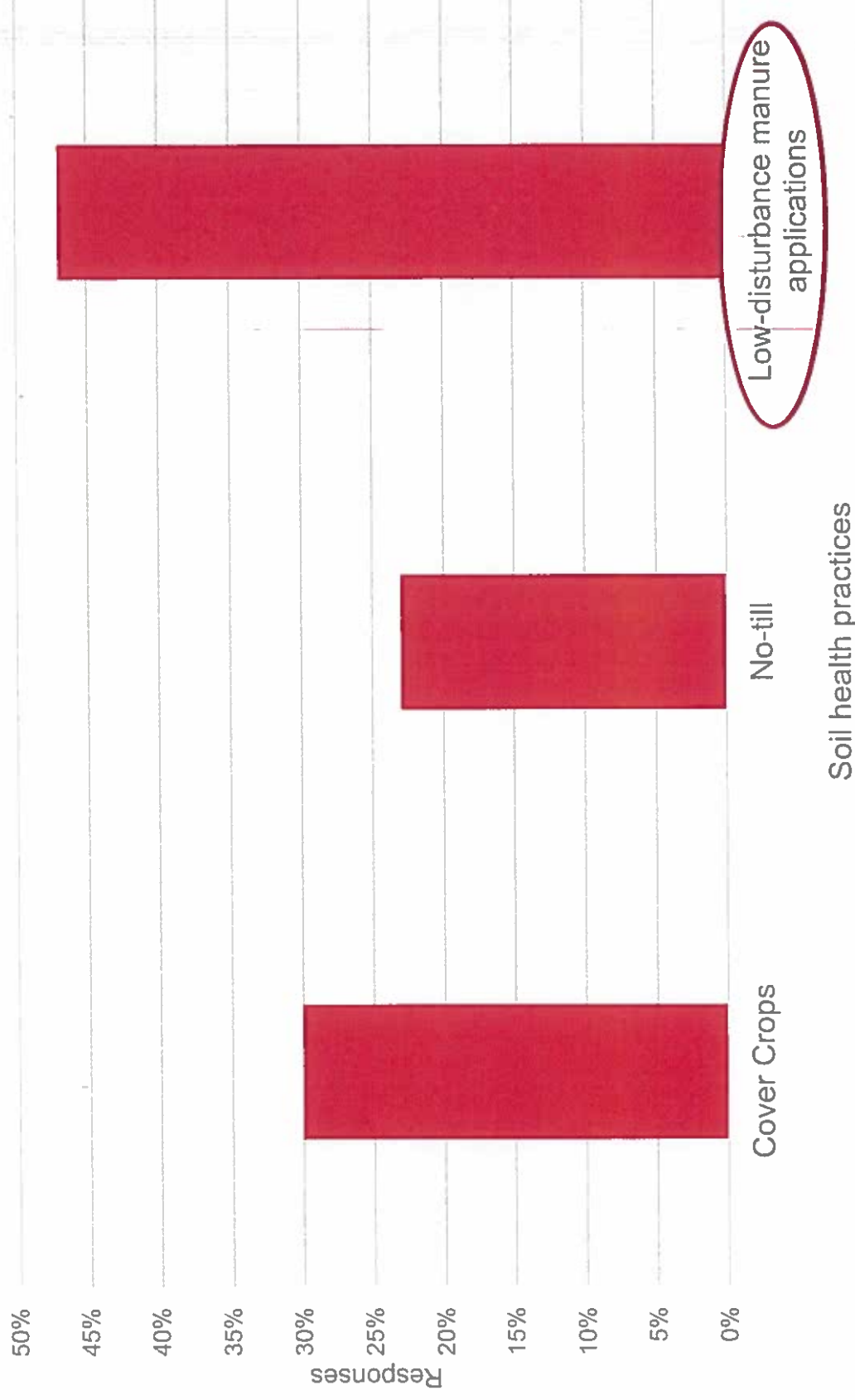
Fox Watershed Farmer Roundtable

What manure management practice are you most willing to try, if money, time, and labor were not factors? (2019)



Fox Watershed Farmer Roundtable

Which of the following soil health practices require the most technical and financial assistance for you to be successful? (2019)



Future Survey Opportunities

- Purdue Needs Assessment – North Central Region Agriculture & Natural Resources Academy
 - Looking at why farmers do not adopt conservation practices
- 2008 Lower Fox Social Indicators Study: Conducted by UW-Extension – potential opportunity to replicate study – surveyed 300 dairy producers in Lower Fox (excluded CAFOs)
 - **General Water Quality Attitudes**
 - 65% agree individual farm practices affect water quality
 - 74% agree personal actions affect water quality
 - 83% disagree that it is OK to reduce water quality to promote economic development
 - 78% agree it's important to protect water quality even if it slows economic development
 - 86% agree it's their personal responsibility to protect water quality
 - 68% agree they would change management practices to protect water quality
 - 14% would be willing to pay more to improve water quality

Future Survey Opportunities

- 2008 Lower Fox Social Indicators Study
 - **Consequences of Poor Water Quality**
 - 37% identified excessive aquatic plant and algae growth as moderate to severe problem
 - 26% identified contaminated drinking water as a moderate to severe problem
 - **Types of Water Pollutants**
 - Only sedimentation was identified as a problem
 - **Sources of Water Pollution (17 common sources)**
 - Mean severity values for all six agricultural sources were the lowest